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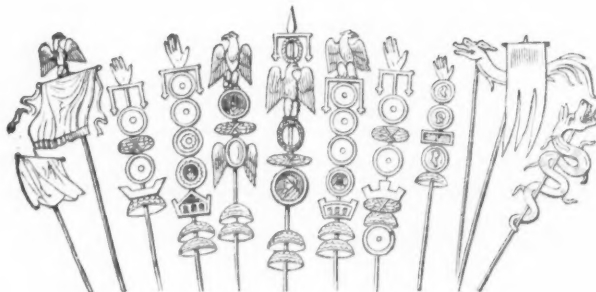
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## SYMPHOSIUS AND THE LATIN RIDDLE<sup>1</sup>

Riddling, the propounding of enigmatical questions, has always been a favorite form of intellectual diversion. In origin it is closely linked with metaphor. A modern psychologist has well said<sup>2</sup>:

... Riddles play upon analogies of things perceived. Essentially the primitive mode of invention is as follows: Someone discovers a new analogy among natural objects, formulates a question concerning this, and thus a new riddle is born. . . .

This process may be followed in a chapter of the Bible which is familiar, certainly, to all who have ever attended Sunday School. I refer to the story of Samson and the lion (Judges 14), which contains one of our earliest riddles. Samson noted that bees had hived in the carcass of the lion he had slain and was struck by a new analogy (recall Professor Lindley's words, quoted above); hence he propounded the following question for the Philistines to solve (14): "Out of the eater came forth meat, And out of the strong came forth sweetness. . . ." With the Semites, a race fond of metaphor, simile, and allegory, riddles and enigmatical sayings have always been popular. When the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon to test his reputation for wisdom, a contest of wits ensued which consisted mainly in the propounding of riddles and in their solution<sup>3</sup>. The Bible contains none of these riddles, but they are preserved in Midrash Mishle and the Second Targum to the Book of Esther. Perhaps the best known of these is the enigma of Lot and his daughters, an especial favorite in medieval times. The correspondence of Solomon and Hiram in regard to the building of the Temple at Jerusalem was another such riddle-strife<sup>4</sup>. The riddle-contest, incidentally, enjoyed a tremendous vogue throughout the Middle Ages. Compare e. g. the anonymous Salomon et Marcolfus, the Salomon et Saturnus, the Altercatio Hadriani et Epicteti, and the Disputatio Regalis Iuvenis Pippini Cum Albino Scholastico.

The Greeks, in whose estimation mental agility was a virtue, were fond of riddles. They recognized two types, the *αἰνύμα* and the *γρίφος*<sup>5</sup> (*aenigma*, *griphus*). Aristotle<sup>6</sup> was the first to point out the close connection between riddle and metaphor. Familiar to all

is the riddle of the Sphinx which Oedipus solved<sup>7</sup>. Not so fortunate was Homer, who is said to have died of pique at his inability to solve the world-old riddle of the louse, propounded to him by three fisherboys<sup>8</sup>—a riddle which we find as No. 30 in Symphosius's collection. The entire Contest of Hesiod and Homer is a riddle-strife of the kind mentioned above. Oracles were commonly given in riddle form; the expression 'Delphic oracle' became a synonym for ambiguity.

To Greek literature we owe our two best sources for ancient riddles: (1) *Anthologia Palatina*, Book 14, entire, a collection of riddles, both arithmetical and oracular, in epigram form; (2) *Athenaeus*, *Deipnosophistae*, 10.69-88, (448 b-459 c), where the after-dinner conversation turns to riddles and conundrums, and dozens are quoted from a wide range of writers.

In Latin literature we have only one source similar to the passage in *Athenaeus*, though it is comparable to the Greek neither in range nor in variety. In *Aulus Gellius* we find described the after-dinner recreations of Roman students celebrating the *Saturnalia* in Athens. Although Gellius terms some of the *quaestiones* there propounded *aenigmata*, none was a genuine riddle. Such a poser as 'When I lie and say that I lie, am I lying or telling the truth?'<sup>9</sup> is neither *aenigma* nor *griphus*, but a problem in logic of the *non-sequitur* type. This and other questions drawn from the realms of literature and grammar make up the examples given by Gellius of conundrums. Although the more sober-minded Roman was not so prone to riddling as was the mentally agile Greek, Latin literature is not without its examples of riddles. Comparatively few of these were genuinely Roman in origin. Gellius, fortunately, has preserved for us one that could only be Roman in origin, for it involves a pun on a Latin name<sup>10</sup>:

Semel minusne an bis minus sit, nescio;  
An utrumque eorum, ut quondam audivi dicier,  
Ipsi Iovi regi noluit concedere<sup>11</sup>.

I know not if he's minus once or twice,  
Or both of these, who would not give his place,  
As I once heard it said, to Jove himself.

The answer is *Terminus* (i. e. once *minus* and twice *minus* = thrice [*ter*] *minus*), the stubborn god who refused to budge from his original site on the Capitoline Hill. Gellius quotes the riddle from Varro, *De Sermone Latino* Ad Marcellum, Book 2. Gellius (12.6.1) in-

<sup>1</sup>For this riddle in prose compare Apollodorus 3.8; for it in verse compare *Athenaeus*, 10.83 (456 b) and *Anthologia Palatina* 14.64.

<sup>2</sup>Contest of Homer and Hesiod 326.

<sup>3</sup>This and similar questions are found in 18.2; compare also 18.13. See my article on *Aulus Gellius*, entitled *A Litterateur of the Age of the Antonines*, *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 20.99-105.

<sup>4</sup>12.6.2. I give Professor Rolfe's text and translation as they appear in *The Loeb Classical Library* (*The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, With an English Translation. Three volumes, 1927, 1927, 1928). <For notices of these volumes see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 21.27, 29.162-163. C. K.>

<sup>5</sup>Compare Franz Buecheler, *Das Aelteste Lateinische Räthsel*, *Rheinisches Museum* 46 (1891), 159-160.

<sup>1</sup>This paper was read at the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, held at Princeton University, May 17-18, 1928. The material for the paper was gathered in preparation for my edition and translation of *Symphosius*, with commentary and introduction.

<The delay in the publication of this paper is chargeable, in large part, to me. I regret the delay.

The work to which Professor Ohl refers above is his doctoral dissertation, accepted by the University of Pennsylvania. The dissertation (137 pages) was privately printed at Philadelphia, 1928. C. K.>

<sup>2</sup>E. H. Lindley, *A Study of Puzzles with Special Reference to the Psychology of Mental Adaptation*, *American Journal of Psychology* 8 (1897), 484. <sup>3</sup>1 Kings 10.1-3.

<sup>4</sup>Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 8.5.3.

<sup>5</sup>Compare K. Ohlert, *Rätsel und Rätselspiele der Alten Griechen*, 17-22 (Berlin, 1912). <sup>6</sup>Rhetoric 3.11.6.

forms us that an older Latin term for *aenigmata* was *scirpi*; riddles were so called, in all probability, because men saw in them a resemblance to the involved pattern of plaited rushes.

Ovid represents Numa (whose reputation for wisdom made him to the Romans what Solomon was to the Hebrews) as being tested by Jupiter in three brief riddles which the king answers promptly and correctly<sup>12</sup>. In his account of the origin of the festival of the Fordicidia, Ovid<sup>13</sup> has Faunus approach Numa in a dream with a riddle to the effect that Tellus must be placated by the sacrifice of two spirits (*animae*), though but one animal is to be killed. Egeria proposes as the solution of the difficulty the sacrifice of a pregnant cow, and this sacrifice was the distinctive feature of the annually recurring Fordicidia.

In Seneca, *Phoenissae*<sup>14</sup>, we find the age-old incest or mixed-parentage riddle, which in Greece was quite naturally associated with the Oedipus story. The same riddle often had Lot and his daughters for its subject; this version was a favorite throughout the Middle Ages<sup>15</sup>. One of the earliest Latin variations occurs in the anonymous *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*<sup>16</sup>.

Riddling formed part of the diversion at Trimalchio's dinner. One riddle is directly propounded: *Qui de nobis longe venio, late venio? Solve me*<sup>17</sup>. Two others are suggested: *Qui de nobis currit et de loco non movetur?* and *Qui de nobis crescit et minor fit?* The solutions are not given, but would seem to be 'foot', 'eye', and 'hair' respectively<sup>18</sup>. Cleverer by far was the distribution of *apophoreta*, 'favors', for the guests to carry home, by means of tickets (*pittacia, tesserae*) on which riddles concealing the names of the presents were written. Most of Trimalchio's jokes depend upon allusions difficult for us to grasp and virtually impossible to render in English. One of the more obvious depends upon a double pun. A guest picks from the cup that a slave-boy is carrying around a ticket with the words *Muraena et littera*, 'A sea-eel and a letter'; in the words of Petronius, the guest *murem cum rana alligata fascemque betae accepit*<sup>19</sup>, 'got a mouse and a frog tied together and a bundle of beetroot'. Suetonius<sup>20</sup> states that Augustus was fond of distributing gifts in like manner *titulis obscuris et ambiguis*.

Among the inscriptions scratched by idlers upon the house-walls of Pompeii is found a riddle involving a common pun<sup>21</sup>:

Zetema

Mulier ferebat filium similem sui.  
Nec meus est nec mi similat, sed  
vellem esset meus.

'A problem. A mother bore a son resembling her. He is not mine nor like me, but I would that he were mine'.

<sup>12</sup>Fasti 3.339-342. For similarity of ideas involved in the play on the word *caput* compare Symphosius 94.2.

<sup>13</sup>In 92.2 Symphosius closely parallels this proposition, especially in his use of the word *anima*. <sup>14</sup>131-139.

<sup>15</sup>Compare J. B. Friedreich, *Geschichte des Räthsels*, 98-103 (Dresden, 1860).

<sup>16</sup>Chapter 4. The best text is that in the Teubner Series, by A. Riese (second edition, 1893).

<sup>17</sup>The punctuation here is that given by Buecheler, and by Heseltine (in The Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>18</sup>The three riddles all occur in Petronius 58.

<sup>19</sup>Petronius 56. <sup>20</sup>Augustus 75.

<sup>21</sup>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum 4.1877. Compare Ohlert (as cited in note 5, above), 192.

The point lies in the *double entendre* in the words *similem sui*. Since *sui* is a homonym, i. e. a form not only of *suus* but also of *sus*, by *mulier* we are to understand a 'mother-sow'.

Among the later writers Ausonius was especially fond of riddling in all its forms. Many of his poems are acrostics, anagrams, or epigrams, the solutions of which are concealed from the reader, but are indicated in their wording, so that they may be easily guessed or worked out<sup>22</sup>. Especially important is his prose introduction to his *Griphus Ternarii Numeri*<sup>23</sup>, which, brief as it is, has value for us, since, apart from one or two passages in Gellius, it gives the only discussion in Latin of riddle-writing, for Latin literature has nothing comparable to Athenaeus 10.69-88 (448 b-459 c).

Yet Latin literature has bequeathed to posterity the only complete collection of ancient riddles that we possess in which all the riddles are the work of one man (the riddles given by Athenaeus come from various hands). Amid the writings of the Latin Anthology contained in the great Salmasian Codex we find a hundred riddles under the name Symphosius<sup>24</sup>. Nothing beyond the name is known of the writer. Even the name has been the subject of dispute. In the otherwise excellent edition of Lactantius by Christian August Heumann (Hannover, 1736) the text of Symphosius is included and the absurd thesis is set up that these riddles were the lost Symposium of Lactantius mentioned by Jerome (*De Viris Illustribus* 80). I will say here only<sup>25</sup> that this theory of authorship finds no acceptance among scholars to-day, who are virtually unanimous in accepting for these hundred enigmas an author named Symphosius, of the fourth or the fifth century of our era. Both in style and in spirit he is kindred with such late writers as Ausonius, Macrobius, and Martianus Capella, trained rhetoricians and grammarians, who delighted in jest, conundrum, and quip for mental recreation.

The enigmas consist each of three hexameter lines. Their original number was one hundred, but No. 96 has disappeared from the manuscripts, in some of which various attempts were made to supply the gap. They are preceded by a preface of 15 (or 17) hexameter lines<sup>26</sup>, in which the author states as follows the occasion and the purpose of writing this collection of riddles (I reproduce the translation given in my edition, page 31):

While Saturn's festive season was making its yearly return, always for me a holiday of unbroken fun, after joyous banquets and the dinner's dulcet draughts, when amid doting old women and prattling children there clamored far and wide the eloquence of intoxicated tongues, then the wordy gathering in their fondness for verbal quip mulled over long at random some trifles with grand titles; but foolish were the many jests they made. No small matter was it, but

<sup>22</sup>Compare e. g. *Epistulae* 14.71-81 (= 18.14, 71-81).

<sup>23</sup>Book 16.

<sup>24</sup>The text may be found in A. Riese, *Anthologia Latina*, 1, No. 286 (Leipzig, Teubner, 1899), or in A. Baehrens, *Poetae Latini Minores*, 4, No. 440 (Leipzig, Teubner, 1882). Riese, though he is hampered by a too rigid adherence to the readings of one class of the manuscripts (D), has an unquestionably better text than Baehrens, whose propensity to emendation has too often altered the text of Symphosius out of all semblance to the original.

<sup>25</sup>I give the arguments in my edition of Symphosius, 13-15 (see note 1, above).

<sup>26</sup>The genuineness of the first two lines is questionable.



like a great contest, to set or solve in various ways each one in turn. But I, who had brought along with me nothing that I could proffer, lest I seem to be the only one to have kept silent in disgrace, made these verses from their off-hand conundrums. One must not be wise amid the otherwise. Pardon, reader, the indiscretions of a tipsy Muse.

Then follow the hundred enigmas. The prosody is excellent throughout, and the Latinity shows virtually no departures from classical norm. But the most extraordinary feature of Symphosius's composition is his cleverness in the use of words and his remarkable command over the devices of alliteration, assonance, and even rhyme. In the 315 hexameter lines about 90 examples<sup>27</sup> of internal rhyme and end rhyme can be discovered; several are of the Leonine type, so popular in the Middle Ages. Among the examples of assonance not involving rhyme might be adduced the succession of *u*-sounds in 54.1 *Exiguum munus flexu mucronis adunci*, and a still more remarkable double assonance (*u* and *qu*) in 79.3 *Ducor ubique sequens et me quoque cuncta sequuntur*.

More striking by far than Symphosius's tendency toward rhyme is his mastery of alliteration and word-play. Frequently the two are joined, as e. g. in 5.2 *Vincior ipsa prius, sed vincio vincta vicissim*, 'first I myself am bound, but when bound I bind in turn', said of a chain (*catena*). Sometimes there is double alliteration in one line, as in 72.1 *Truncum terra tegit, latitant in cespite lymphae*, 'The turf protects a tree-trunk, a liquid lurks beneath the sod', said of a wooden water-pipe (*tubus*).

As an example of truly intricate phrasing consider the following (44)<sup>28</sup>:

Mordeo mordentes, ultro non mordeo quemquam;  
Sed sunt mordentem multi mordere parati.  
Nemo timet morsum, dentes quia non habet ullos.

I bite the biters, of my own accord I bite no one; but many are ready to bite me even though I bite. No one fears my bite, for teeth it has none.

The solution of this riddle is 'the onion' (*cepa*).

But perhaps the best example of balanced rhyme, assonance, alliteration, and word-play all in one is No. 70:

Lex bona dicendi, lex sum quoque dura tacendi,  
Ius avidae linguae, finis sine fine loquendi,  
Ipsa fluens, dum verba fluunt, ut lingua quiescat.

Kind rule of speech, I am also the hard rule of silence, judgment upon a greedy tongue, an end to endless talking, flowing myself, as long as the words flow on, that the tongue may rest.

Observe the Leonine rhyme *dicendi...tacendi...loquendi*, the playful use of *lex* and *ius*, and the word-play (with consequent alliteration) of *finis sine fine* and *fluens...fluunt*. The solution of this riddle is that fixture of the ancient law-court, the terror of fluent advocates and the relief of wearied jurors, the water-clock (*clepsydra*).

By its very nature riddle-writing calls for word-

play. In this Symphosius abounds. There are at least a dozen examples of *double entendre*, single words used in a two-fold sense. No. 92, for instance, contains two:

Plus ego sustinui quam corpus debuit unum.  
Tres animas habui, quas omnes intus habebam:  
Discessere duae, sed tertia paene peregit.

More have I borne than one body ought. Three souls did I have, all of which I had within me: a pair departed, but the third pretty nearly perished too.

The solution is 'a mother of twins' (*mulier quae geminos pariebat*). Observe the double sense of *sustinui* ('I bore a burden', 'I endured'), which 'borne' can, fortunately, reproduce exactly. Observe also the double alliteration in the third line (which I have here, as elsewhere, attempted to reproduce in English) and the *double entendre* in the use of *discessere* and *peregit*: two souls, the twins, depart from the mother's body; her own nearly follows them, i. e. in the agony of childbirth she nearly departs this life.

We have also direct puns, as in 33.1 *Dentibus insanis ego sum, qui vinco bidentes*, said of the wolf (*lupus*), and in 34.3 *Et fera sum sapiens, sapiens fera si qua vocatur*, said of the fox (*vulpes*).

But Symphosius's most effective device by far is a third-line word-play upon compounds of the same verb. These can sometimes be rendered in English, but often can only be approximated. Note this example (56):

Maior eram longe quondam, dum vita manebat;  
Sed nunc exanimis lacerata ligata revulsa  
Dedita sum terrae, tumulo sed condita non sum.

Larger was I once by far, while life remained; but now lifeless, lacerated, stripped and fastened, I am laid upon the ground, but not laid away in a tomb.

The solution is 'a boot' (*caliga*).

Symphosius shows his skill in many apt phrases, as, for instance, *capitis vestigia* (57):

In caput ingredior, quia de pede pendeo solo.  
Vertice tango solum, capitis vestigia signo;  
Sed multi comites casum patiuntur eundem.

Upon my head I walk, because I hang from a single foot. With my top I touch the ground, and leave behind me head-prints; but many comrades suffer the same lot.

The solution is a hob-nail (*clavus caligaris*).

At times the expression is not only apt but beautiful. There is a true poetic touch in *purpura sum terrae* (45):

Purpura sum terrae, pulchro perfusa colore;  
Saeptaque, ne violer, telis defensor acutis.  
O felix, longo si possim vivere fato!

Earth's crimson am I, with beauteous blush suffused; hedged about, that I may not suffer injury, I am defended by sharp weapons. O happy, if it were my fate long to abide.

The solution is 'a rose' (*rosa*). In 11.1 snow is termed *pulvis aquae tenuis*, 'light dust of water'.

There are two instances (36, 74) of a riddle within a riddle, i. e. a secondary word is to be derived from the answer to the riddle itself. Let No. 74 suffice:

Deucalion ego sum crudeli sospes ab unda,  
Affinis terrae sed longe durior illa.  
Littera decedat: volucris quoque nomen habebō.

<sup>27</sup>Compare M. Manitius, *Zur Anthologia Latina*, Rheinisches Museum 48 (1893), 474-475.

<sup>28</sup>Here and throughout the rest of this paper the quotations from Symphosius are given exactly as they appear in Professor Ohl's edition, since Professor Ohl is quoting himself. The translations which follow the Latin passages are also quotations from Professor Ohl's edition. C. K. >

Deucalion am I, saved from the cruel wave, related to earth, but harder far than it. Let one letter drop: the name of a flying creature too I shall have.

The solution is a stone (*lapis*); if from *lapis* the first letter be taken, *apis* is the result.

The instances cited above have been chosen to illustrate particular points. Many other enigmas of equal or even greater interest might be quoted as examples of Symphosius's wide range of subjects. The enigmas are thoroughly pagan in character; they include for the most part objects closely associated with the daily life of man. They fall into no definite groups, though there is a tendency to associate those dealing with similar or related subjects. For instance, we have a group dealing with animals (14-39), another with plants, flowers, vegetables, and food-stuffs (40-50); many deal with articles of clothing and personal adornment, tools and implements of domestic use, structures of everyday use (such as ship, bridge, ladder); finally, several deal with natural phenomena (such as clouds, rain, snow). The range is considerable and the variety interesting. Some are easily guessed; others (such as 94, One-Eyed Garlic Vendor) would be impossible of solution without the lemmata.

How many of these riddles are strictly original with Symphosius we have no way of telling, for it would be quite wrong to infer that all those other than the half-dozen or so for which parallels can be found in Greek literature<sup>29</sup> originated with him.

Although we cannot accurately gauge our indebtedness to Symphosius as the originator of the enigmas he gives, we owe to him their preservation in a poetic form of no mean merit. He has been rightly termed 'in one sense the father of the riddles of our era...'<sup>30</sup> He is to riddle-writing what Martial was to the epigram: he gave it artistic form, and set the standard for future generations. As one critic has said, "...The enigmas of Symphosius have dominated all riddles, both artistic and popular, since his day..."<sup>31</sup> He set the fashion for writing them in groups of a hundred. The fashion of writing things in groups of a hundred persists; witness such a title as *A Century of Charades*<sup>32</sup>. Symphosius's enigmas influenced widely all riddle-writing of the Middle Ages. The anonymous scribe who refashioned in Latin the Hellenistic story of the wanderings of Apollonius, King of Tyre, embellished the tale with ten enigmas taken from Symphosius<sup>33</sup>. Three of these passed with the Apollonius story into the *Gesta Romanorum*<sup>34</sup>. Alcuin paraphrased seven for the instruction of his royal pupil, Pepin the Short<sup>35</sup>. We find traces of Symphosius's influence in the so-called *Bern Riddles*<sup>36</sup>, and in the Anglo-Saxon riddles of the *Exeter Book*. Symphosius's greatest follower was Aldhelm, the great riddle-writer of eighth-century England, who

acknowledges his indebtedness to Symphosius in his treatise on prosody, which serves as a prose introduction to his own hundred enigmas (the *Epistola Ad Acircium*, or *Liber De Septenario*), and quotes no less than a dozen lines from his predecessor. Archbishop Tatwine was the next ecclesiastical writer of riddles. He completed only forty. These were shortly afterward supplemented by Eusebius, who brought the number up to one hundred, thus continuing the tradition established by Symphosius and followed by Aldhelm.

The editio princeps of Symphosius was prepared by Joachimus Perionius (Paris, 1533). Perionius, in a brief and quaintly worded Prefatio, after expressing his delight in chancing upon the work of so interesting an author and his desire to save this excellent work from oblivion, passes judgment upon Symphosius in terms which still hold good:

De puritate quidem Latini sermonis, cum iis qui supra mille annos scripserunt... facile contenderit. Paucis vero antiquorum palmam apte dicendi concesserit, ut qui res obscurissimas tractet planissime, in quo vis ingenii perspicui potest vel maxima. Iam vero rerum earum quas tractat, vim eum et naturas plane tenuisse, vel ex hoc intellegi potest, quod artem magna ex parte in iocos, risus et sales contulit, in quibus peritia sola dominatur.

LERANON VALLEY COLLEGE,  
ANNVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

RAYMOND T. OHL

## CLASSICAL WEATHER LORE OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

(Concluded from page 208)

### ELICITING THE THUNDERBOLT

The ancients were interested not only in averting the thunderbolt, but also in drawing it down for their own benefit. Servius<sup>400</sup> goes so far as to state that Prometheus understood 'the method of eliciting thunderbolts', and that he imparted this knowledge to mankind, and hence was said to have stolen fire. The Stoics interpreted the story of the throwing of Hephaestus from heaven as meaning that man originally lighted his fires by lightning and the heat of the sun<sup>401</sup>. We are told that at one time man did not apply fire to altars, but elicited by prayers the divine fire which ignited them<sup>402</sup>.

There were Thessalian enchantresses who by their voices alone could bring down clouds and rains, and even thunder, without the permission of Zeus<sup>403</sup>. The Etruscans used rites and incantations to effect the same results upon bolts<sup>404</sup>.

The Romans of the regal period and the Etruscans seem to have been more accustomed, however, to bringing down the bolt by dealings with Iuppiter Elicius himself. Though he may have had to do with rain originally, he was more generally thought of as the god from whom the bolt was to be drawn<sup>405</sup>.

<sup>29</sup>For example, those on Smoke (7), Vine (53), Ball (59), Saw (60), and Sleep (99) repeat the queries, if not the form, of several enigmas in the Palatine Anthology, Book 14. But such queries, like the riddle on the Louse (30), were common currency.

<sup>30</sup>Frederick Tupper, Jr., *The Riddles of the Exeter Book*, Introduction, xvii (Boston, Ginn, 1910). <sup>31</sup>*Ibidem*, xxx.

<sup>32</sup>William Bellamy (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1896).

<sup>33</sup>These all occur in Chapters 42 and 43. <sup>34</sup>Chapter 154.

<sup>35</sup>In the *Disputatio Pippini Cum Albino*. Compare W. Wilmanns, *Hauptschrift für Deutsches Altertum* 14, 539-555.

<sup>36</sup>For the text see A. Riese, *Anthologia Latina*, I, No. 481 (see note 24, above).

<sup>400</sup>On Vergil, *Eclouges* 6.42.

<sup>401</sup>Pauly-Wissowa, under Hephaistos, 8.338-339.

<sup>402</sup>Servius on Vergil, *Aeneid* 12.209.

<sup>403</sup>Pliny 2.140. Compare Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus* 467-471.

<sup>404</sup>G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, 121 (Munich, Beck, 1912). See also Pauly-Wissowa, under Iuppiter, 10.1129-1130; C. O. Thulin, *Die Etruskische Disciplin*, Part I, 121-122 (Göteborg, 1906). The verb *elicere* is used several times with *fulmen* as its object.

In order to 'elicit' from the divinities what portents sent by bolts or in any other manner had to be expiated Numa dedicated an altar to Iuppiter Elicius on the Aventine<sup>406</sup>. He learned from the imps Picus and Faunus, or, according to some accounts, from Jupiter himself, a charm for luring down lightning. By verbal subtlety he changed it from heads of men to sprats<sup>407</sup>.

We may well believe Pliny<sup>408</sup> when he says that drawing down Jupiter was an extremely difficult undertaking. Tullus Hostilius made a mistake in the ceremony, as a result of which he and his whole household perished from the stroke of a thunderbolt<sup>409</sup>. Numa, however, did not suffer any ill consequences, because he employed the fire only in sacrifices to the gods<sup>410</sup>.

The Etruscans seem to have been able to control even the direction and the course of thunderbolts. According to an old story, they used this means of killing a monster which was ravaging the territory around Volsinii<sup>411</sup>. They also terrified barbarians by causing bolts to fall upon them. In 408, when Alaric was besieging Rome, to Etruscan diviners who claimed they had driven an enemy away from another city by means of bolts an opportunity was given to do a similar service for Rome, but they failed<sup>412</sup>. They could not match the skill of their ancestors, whose reputation as masters of the lightning was so great<sup>413</sup> that some scholars have seriously questioned whether they did not anticipate Franklin<sup>414</sup>.

The possibility of controlling the elements was but seldom questioned, so that, when Constantine was trying to restrict the activities of magicians, he made an exception of those who were endeavoring to avert hail and lightning<sup>415</sup>.

In the ninth century Agobard, Bishop of Lyons, who wrote a lengthy treatise *De Grandine et Tonitruis*<sup>416</sup>, said in his first sentence that almost all men, both distinguished and humble, urban and rustic, old and young, believed that hail and thunder could be caused at the will of man.

An interesting account of precise manipulation of the elements like pieces in a game is given by Marco Polo<sup>417</sup>. He thus describes the abilities of the astrologers and magicians in the palace of the grand khan in the city of Sandu:

...if it should happen that the sky becomes cloudy and threatens rain, they ascend the roof of the palace where the grand khan resides at the time, and by the force of their incantations they prevent the rain from falling and stay the tempest; so that whilst, in the sur-

rounding country, storms of rain, wind, and thunder are experienced, the palace itself remains unaffected by the elements.

A peculiar method of controlling thunder is attributed to the Brahmans, who are said to have kept both thunder and winds in jars. This story was ridiculed by Eusebius<sup>418</sup>.

#### WIELDERS OF THE BOLT

Since classical times the bolt has been so definitely associated with Zeus that we are inclined to forget that other gods wielded it. It was only after a struggle that Zeus attained his preeminence in this respect. Lucretius<sup>419</sup> speaks rather generally of Jupiter and the other gods as throwing fire. When Delphi was in danger from a detachment of Xerxes's army, thunderbolts crashed down upon that army<sup>420</sup>. Many of the invaders were killed and others fled in terror. These bolts were attributed, not to a specific god, but to the deities in general<sup>421</sup>. Justinus<sup>422</sup> writes thus of the matter:

'Forthwith, just as if he were warring not merely with the Greeks, but with the immortal gods also, this band was entirely destroyed by storms and thunderbolts, that he might know that the strength of man is of no avail against the gods'.

Of the Etruscan gods nine were supposed to be able to throw bolts<sup>423</sup>. Amid groves and altars and shrines the Romans themselves had a number of deities whom they designated simply as *Tonantes* and *Feretrii*<sup>424</sup>.

There seems to have been a tradition that Zeus shared the thunderbolt with his two brothers. A painting on an amphora found at Chiusi depicts a triad of divinities, among whom is Poseidon, recognizable by his trident, holding a bolt in his left hand. The other gods clasp bolts in their right hands and lightning in their left<sup>425</sup>. In a discussion of this vase<sup>426</sup> attention has been called to a passage in Pausanias<sup>427</sup> in which Aeschylus is quoted as giving the name Zeus to the god that rules in the seas and also to the fact that Homer<sup>428</sup> speaks of an 'under-earth' Zeus. It is quite possible, therefore, that this vase represents a Zeus-triad which controlled the bolt.

There are many indications that the trident of Poseidon was originally a thunder-weapon. Though the Greeks of historic times thought it was derived from the fishing-spear<sup>429</sup>, in the Homeric poems its employment is suggestive of the bolt. With it Poseidon stirs up storms and clouds<sup>430</sup>, shivers a rock<sup>431</sup>, and, with Apollo and Zeus, makes the springs of Mount Ida well up, and demolishes impromptu fortifications of the Achaeans<sup>432</sup>. Homer actually compares Poseidon's trident to the lightning<sup>433</sup>. It is not surprising, therefore, to find a statement that the correct analogue

<sup>406</sup>Livy 1.20.7. See also the text in connection with note 343, above.

<sup>407</sup>Plutarch, Numa 15. Compare Ovid, *Fasti* 3.339-343; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes* 5.1. <sup>408</sup>28.13.

<sup>409</sup>Pliny 2.140. See also Livy 1.31.8; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 3.35; Valerius Maximus 9.12.1.

<sup>410</sup>Servius on Vergil, *Eclouges* 6.42.

<sup>411</sup>Pliny 2.140. Compare Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus* 1991-1996.

<sup>412</sup>Zosimus 5.1; Sozomenos, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 9.6.

<sup>413</sup>See, for example, Seneca 2.32.1. For a good modern discussion see K. O. Müller, *Die Etrusker*, 176-180 (Stuttgart, A. Heitz, 1877). See also *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 18.156-157.

<sup>414</sup>See Darenberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, under Fulmen, 2.1356.

<sup>415</sup>Code Theodosianus 9.16.3.

<sup>416</sup>Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 104.147-158.

<sup>417</sup>The Travels of Marco Polo, Book I, Chapter 57, pages 147-148 (see note 95, above).

<sup>418</sup>Contra Hieroclem 24 (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 22.829. See also 824).

<sup>419</sup>6.387-389 quod si Iuppiter atque alii fulgentia divi terrifico quatunt sonitu caelestia templa et iaciunt ignem quo quouque cumque voluptas...

<sup>420</sup>Herodotus 8.37. <sup>421</sup>Diodorus 11.14. <sup>422</sup>2.12.

<sup>423</sup>Pliny 2.138. <sup>424</sup>Pliny 2.140.

<sup>425</sup>Archäologische Zeitung, 1851, Plate XXVII.

<sup>426</sup>By Th. Panofka, *Kyzikos und Herakles*, *Archäologische Zeitung*, 1851, 306-314.

<sup>427</sup>2.24.4. <sup>428</sup>Iliad 9.457. Compare Pausanias 2.24.4.

<sup>429</sup>C. Blinkenberg, 51-52 (see note 274, above).

<sup>430</sup>Odyssey 5.291-292. <sup>431</sup>Odyssey 4.506-507.

<sup>432</sup>Iliad 12.17-33. <sup>433</sup>Iliad 14.385-386.



of the trident is "the group of lightning-shafts in the hands of the ancient Assyrian gods"<sup>434</sup>.

The hurling of the bolt was one of the prerogatives of Apollo<sup>435</sup>. To avenge the slaying of Glaucus by Zeus Apollo killed with a bolt the Cyclopes who had forged the fatal bolt used by Zeus<sup>436</sup>. When the Gauls under Brennus were bent upon sacking Delphi, the constant thundering and the frequent bolts, as well as the earthquakes by day, were attributed to the anger of the god who presided at that place<sup>437</sup>.

Of the goddesses Athena perhaps employed the bolt most frequently. She boasted that she alone knew the keys of the chamber where thunderbolts were kept<sup>438</sup>. She is sometimes represented as holding bolts in her right hand<sup>439</sup>. In the Troades of Euripides<sup>440</sup> she says that Zeus promised to give her the thunderbolt to smite the Achaean ships returning from Troy and to set them on fire. Ajax was the most famous of her victims<sup>441</sup>. Hera complained because Athena was privileged to use Jove's bolt to exact vengeance<sup>442</sup>. In the Iliad<sup>443</sup> both Athena and Hera are represented as thundering in honor of Agamemnon. The evidence indicates, therefore, that Athena was originally a thunder-goddess or weather-goddess<sup>444</sup>.

On occasion Juno<sup>445</sup>, Venus<sup>446</sup>, and even Diana<sup>447</sup> wielded the bolt. Some authorities ascribed *manubiae* to Jupiter, Juno, and Mars<sup>448</sup>.

The list of wielders of the bolt might easily be increased, especially with the help of numismatic evidence<sup>449</sup>, but enough examples have been cited to show that Zeus, although he was the deity that punished impious mortals for imitating thunder and lightning, was not the only divine being who hurled the bolts. If it is true, as Servius says<sup>450</sup>, that the ancients thought that the bolt belonged to Zeus alone, he was very generous in lending it to fellow-deities in emergencies.

#### THUNDER AND LIGHTNING IN RELIGIOUS SERVICES

There is much evidence of the peculiar and profound religious reverence of the ancients for the bolt and its chief wielder, as may be shown by a hasty sketch of the various ways in which they appealed to this deity and his elements<sup>451</sup>. In the invocation that precedes the Orphic Hymns, Thunders and Winds are addressed, together with a long list of gods and heroes and other

beings. When Greece lay bare and parched, Aeacus, learning from the Pythian oracle that the salvation of the land depended on his supplications, ascended a mountain and invoked Zeus, who at once thundered favorably and sent a torrent of rain<sup>452</sup>.

Among the Orphic Hymns<sup>453</sup> there are two called 'Thundering Zeus' and 'Lightning Zeus', which were to be accompanied by the burning of incense. The offering of incense to Zeus is mentioned by Ovid also<sup>454</sup>.

In the days of Appian the inhabitants of Seleucia by the sea were still worshiping thunder and singing its praises because of a portent of thunder when the city was being founded. They even regarded the bolt as a deity<sup>455</sup>.

Altars and temples of the god of thunder and lightning abounded, and, of course, sacrifices and festivals in his honor were not uncommon. Iuppiter Fulgurator had an altar on the Quirinal<sup>456</sup>, and Iuppiter Elicius had one on the Aventine<sup>457</sup>. Temples of Iuppiter Fulgur seem to have been numerous, for Vitruvius<sup>458</sup> says that they should be hypaethral. As we have seen, Augustus erected a temple in honor of Iuppiter Tonans on the Capitoline<sup>459</sup>.

At Bathos in Arcadia, where, according to one tradition, the battle of the gods and the giants took place, sacrifices were offered to lightning, thunder, and storms<sup>460</sup>. At Iopolis, Seleucus sacrificed to Thunderbolt Zeus<sup>461</sup>. For years the people of Tarentum offered sacrifice to the Thunderer on the anniversary of the day on which Zeus smote all Tarentines who had had a part in the disgraceful treatment of women, boys, and girls of a conquered town<sup>462</sup>. The Antae and the Selaveni, tribes which dwelt across the Ister, believed that the maker of the lightning was lord of all things, and to him they sacrificed cattle and other victims<sup>463</sup>.

At Antandros there was a festival of Lightning Zeus which doubtless lasted several days, since reference is made to the conferring of an honorary crown on the first day of the celebration<sup>464</sup>. A prominent place was given to 'bolt-throwing Zeus' in the apparently protracted celebration described in a Tegean inscription which gives an Olympic victor list<sup>465</sup>.

In Phrygia, Zeus Bronton was ardently worshiped; there survive from Phrygia many inscriptions which record the fulfilment of vows to him<sup>466</sup>.

Such expressions as *ιερεὺς Διὸς*<sup>467</sup> and *sacerdos <sic> dei Brontontis*<sup>468</sup> seem to indicate that there were special priests of Zeus in his capacity as Thunderer. At all events the Pythiaists in Athens kept watch

<sup>434</sup>J. R. Harris, *Boanerges* 14 (see note 250, above).

<sup>435</sup>Martianus Capella 1.7; Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* 479; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.9.26.

<sup>436</sup>Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.10.4; Diodorus 4.71.3.

<sup>437</sup>Pausanias 10.23. Compare 1.4.4.

<sup>438</sup>Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 827-828. See also Servius on Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.42.

<sup>439</sup>See Roscher, under *Athene*, 1.692. <sup>440</sup>77-81, 92-94.

<sup>441</sup>See, for example, Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.42-45; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 116; Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.6.

<sup>442</sup>Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.42-45, and Servius on 42.

<sup>443</sup>1.45-46. <sup>444</sup>See Roscher, under *Athene*, 1.675-678.

<sup>445</sup>Martianus Capella 1.67; Statius, *Thebais* 10.67-69; Accius as cited by Servius on Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.42. It is asserted by C. O. Thulin 33 (see note 405, above) that these passages are not sufficient to warrant one in ascribing thunder to the Italian Juno.

<sup>446</sup>Vergil, *Aeneid* 8.520-531. <sup>447</sup>Martianus Capella 9.896.

<sup>448</sup>Servius on Vergil, *Aeneid* 8.429.

<sup>449</sup>See pages 32-33 of an article by Margaret C. Waites, *The Deities of the Sacred Axe*, *American Journal of Archaeology* 27 (1923), 25-56. Almost all her references to such deities are to a Catalogue of the Greek Coins of the British Museum. Many others may be found in that Catalogue.

<sup>450</sup>On Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.42 *Antiqui Iovis solius putaverunt esse fulmen*...

<sup>451</sup>I devoted a few paragraphs to the subject in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 18.155.

<sup>452</sup>Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* 6.3. See also Diodorus 4.61.1-2; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.12.6.

<sup>453</sup>Orphica 19-20 (in the edition of the Orphica, by E. Abel [Leipzig and Prague, 1885]).

<sup>454</sup>Panti 5.301-302. <sup>455</sup>Appian, *Historia Romana* 11.9.58.

<sup>456</sup>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum 6.377.

<sup>457</sup>Varro, *De Lingua Latina* 6.95. <sup>458</sup>1.2.5.

<sup>459</sup>Pliny mentions the temple in 34.10 and 36.50. He also mentions (34.79) a statue of Iuppiter Tonans on the Capitoline.

<sup>460</sup>Pausanias 8.29.1.

<sup>461</sup>Joannes Malalas 8.199 (*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*).

<sup>462</sup>Athenaeus 522 D-F. <sup>463</sup>Procopius 7.14.23.

<sup>464</sup>François Lenormant, *Inscription Grecque d'Antandrus*, *Revue Archéologique*, Nouvelle Série, 10 (1864), 49-51.

<sup>465</sup>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum 1.1513.

<sup>466</sup>See, for example, W. M. Ramsay, *Inscriptions from Nacoleia*, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 3 (1882), 119-127, especially 123; *Sepulchral Customs in Ancient Phrygia*, *ibidem*, 5 (1884), 241-262.

<sup>467</sup>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum 3.4520.

<sup>468</sup>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum 6.733.



for lightning over distant Harma for three days and three nights in each of three successive months<sup>469</sup>. In the Etruscan discipline there were special priests called *fulguratores*<sup>470</sup>.

At Rome priests engaged in sacrifice were not allowed to wear clothes that had been struck<sup>471</sup>. The *flaminica* who had heard thunder was not to engage in any work until she had appeased the gods<sup>472</sup>.

#### CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN CONTROL OF THE BOLT COMPARED

In the first centuries of our era there was rather general agreement between Christians and pagans in the Graeco-Roman world that a supreme being controlled the elements<sup>473</sup>. A pagan who wished to become a Christian was not much troubled by theological meteorology. In the ages of weakening faith especially it was easy for a convert to transfer domination of the weather from Jupiter to the god of the Christians. Paganism regarded Jupiter as the god of lightning, thunder, the thunderbolt, rain, and clear weather<sup>474</sup>, but Minucius Felix<sup>475</sup> is just as matter-of-fact in saying of God that '...in His works and in all the movements of the world we see His power ever present when there is thunder, lightning, or a bolt, and when it is clear'.

Ovid<sup>476</sup> looks upon thunderings as intended to terrify human beings, and Plutarch says<sup>477</sup> that thousands die merely from the fear of being killed. These natural terrors are increased manifold when bolts are regarded as messengers of punishment, an idea well represented by a passage in Juvenal<sup>478</sup>:

Hi sunt qui trepidant et ad omnia fulgura pallent,  
cum tonat, exanimis primo quoque murmure caeli,  
non quasi fortuitus nec ventorum rabie sed  
iratus cadat in terras et iudicet ignis.

Seneca believes<sup>479</sup> that the wise forefathers of the Romans deliberately tried to frighten people into good behavior by creating fear of an armed and avenging justice. It is not insignificant that several names of weapons are applied to bolts also<sup>480</sup>.

<sup>469</sup>Strabo 9.2.11. See THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 18.155.

<sup>470</sup>See, for example, Cicero, De Divinatione 2.109.

<sup>471</sup>Pestus 293 (Lindsay).

<sup>472</sup>Macrobius, Saturnalia 1.16.8.

<sup>473</sup>For interesting examples in the Old Testament see Exodus 9.23, 29-34; Job 28.26; Psalms 18.13-14, 97.4, 135.7, 144.6.

<sup>474</sup>Apuleius, De Mundo 37 Fulgurator et tonitrualis et fulminator etiam imbricator et item dicitur serenator.

<sup>475</sup>32.4.

<sup>476</sup>Metamorphoses 1.55... humanas motura tonitrua mentes.

<sup>477</sup>Moralia 666 C.

<sup>478</sup>13.223-226. See also Vergil, Georgics 1.330-331; Suetonius, Caligula 51.

<sup>479</sup>2.42.3. Compare Cicero, De Divinatione 2.42; Plutarch, Moralia 665 A; Lydus 37 (item under date of April 20).

<sup>480</sup>For example, βέλεμος, Nonnus Dionysius 2.476, 6.212; Διόβλητος... βέλεμος, *ibidem*, 2.511; βέλος, Aeschylus, Prometheus 358, 917; πτεροφόρον Διός βέλος, Aristophanes, Aves 1714; ἔγχοι, *ibidem*, 1749; κήλον, Hesiod, Theogony 708, Homer, Iliad 12.280; διστός, Nonnus Dionysius 2.481; σπῆλα Διός, *ibidem*, 1.155; ἐκρήβολον σπῆλον, Lucian, Timon 1; telum, Lucan 7.197; telum trisulcum, Ovid, Ibis 467. (In this note I have for convenience changed case and number of quoted Greek and Latin words to the nominative singular).—For a number of Greek names of weapons that were applied to bolts see Rheinisches Museum 60 (1905), 15.

Doubtless sagitta was used of the bolt. Statius, Thebais 4.294, speaks of the 'quivered Thunderer' (*pharetratus*... *Tonans*). The arrows which appeared in the hands of the statue of Veiovis, as mentioned by Aulus Gellius 5.12.11, are supposed to represent thunderbolts. See A. L. Frothingham, American Journal of Philology 38 (1917), 386-387. Compare David's prayer for the destruction of his enemies, in Psalms 144.6: "Cast forth lightning, and scatter them; shoot out thine arrows and destroy them". The Sicilian peasant swears by thunder and lightning with the formula "tuoni e saette". See Rheinisches Museum 60 (1905), 19.

A good example of the retributive use of the elements in the Old Testament is to be found in I Samuel 12.17-18:

Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.

So Samuel called unto the Lord; and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.

Centuries later Tertullian<sup>481</sup> said to pagans, 'We worship one deity whom you all know naturally, at whose lightnings and thunders you tremble...' St. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, thus contrasted the attitude of Christians and that of the Manicheans<sup>482</sup>: 'God thunders and we all tremble, whereas they blaspheme. God lightens and all of us bend to the ground, while they utter impious words about the heavens'.

A contemporary illustration of the use of the bolt as a weapon is to be found in the novel Black April<sup>483</sup>:

A crowd of people were around the burning tree, and others were coming. All were talking excitedly. God must have his eye on April to aim a thunderbolt so close to his house. He had a narrow escape. His house might catch fire yet, for pieces of burning limbs were falling, and water could not put out fire started with lightning.

In antiquity many offences called down the vengeance of the thunderbolt. Aesculapius was struck dead because Zeus feared that he might teach mankind the art of healing<sup>484</sup>. Salmoneus suffered a similar penalty for impiety<sup>485</sup>. Capaneus, attacking a gate of Thebes, was smitten for comparing the lightning to mere mid-day heat<sup>486</sup>. Amulius was killed for venturing to imitate the lightning and the thunder of Zeus<sup>487</sup>. Most of the Autarienses, who joined the Cimbri in an expedition bent upon pillaging the temple at Delphi, were destroyed by storm, hurricane, and lightning before they had time to commit the sacrilege<sup>488</sup>.

In view of such examples and scores of others that might be cited, it is hard to understand how a Rhodian emissary could say to the Romans, in 167 B. C.<sup>489</sup>, 'For some chide even the gods with rather bold words and we have never heard that anyone has been struck with a bolt for that reason'.

A modern example of the use of the bolt to punish irreverence is to be found in The Invisible World, by Bishop Joseph Hall<sup>490</sup>:

A Master of Philosophy, travelling with others on the way, when a fearful Thunderstorm arose, check'd the Fear of his Fellows, and discours'd to them of the Natural Reasons of that Uproar in the Clouds, and those sudden Flashes wherewith they seem'd (out of

<sup>481</sup>Ad Scapulam 2.1.

<sup>482</sup>Catechesis 6.34 (Migne, Patrologia Graeca, 33.600).

<sup>483</sup>Page 261 (<New York>, Grosset and Dunlap, 1927).

<sup>484</sup>Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 3.10.4. Compare Vergil, Aeneid 7.772-773; Cicero, De Natura Deorum 3.57.

<sup>485</sup>See, for example, Diodorus 4.68.

<sup>486</sup>Aeschylus, Septem Contra Thebas 430-446.

<sup>487</sup>Zonaras 7.1. See also THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 18.157.

<sup>488</sup>Appian, De Rebus Illyricis 4. Compare Propertius 3.13.51; Justinus 28.8.10-14.

<sup>489</sup>Livy 45.23.19. Euripides (Cyclops 320) makes Cyclops say that he does not fear the bolt of Zeus.

<sup>490</sup>See The Works of the Right Reverend Father in God, Joseph Hall, Lord Bishop of Norwich, 2.403 (London, 1738). The passage is quoted, in somewhat altered form, by W. E. H. Lecky, History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne, 1.360 (1891 edition, New York, Appleton).

the ignorance of Causes) to be too much affrighted; in the midst of his philosophical Discourse, he was struck dead with that dread Eruption which he slighted: What could this be but the Finger of that God, who will have his works rather entertain'd with Wonder and Trembling, than with curious Scanning?

Pagans of antiquity knew that Zeus could be induced to withhold his hand<sup>491</sup>, but narrow escapes from being hit were, I believe, generally regarded by the ancients as due merely to luck or good fortune, not to the special favor of Zeus, although it is true that many inscriptions were set up to express thanks for salvation<sup>492</sup>. Augustus, who had barely missed being hit during his campaign against the Cantabrians, erected a temple to Iuppiter Tonans as an expression of his gratitude<sup>493</sup>.

The Christians, however, were inclined to regard similar escapes as nothing short of miraculous and as due to Providence. According to one account of the celebrated battle of the Romans with the Quadi, God terrified the barbarians with thunderbolts and refreshed the Romans with rain<sup>494</sup>. Gregory of Tours<sup>495</sup> tells how a thunderstorm which did much damage in a certain community wrecked the interior of a Church, but left unharmed all persons within it, thanks to the guardianship and the merit of a martyr. In comparatively recent times Increase Mather devoted to providential escapes from lightning an entire chapter of his book on Remarkable Providences Illustrative of the Earlier Days of American Colonisation<sup>496</sup>.

#### ANCIENT RECOGNITION OF THE UNSCIENTIFIC CHARACTER OF POPULAR WEATHER LORE

In spite of the prevailing ignorance of the nature and the significance of thunder and lightning, a few of the ancients managed to rise above the popular notions of their day. Lucretius explains<sup>497</sup> that the fires of the bolts are not signs of wind and rain. He recognizes<sup>498</sup> that a skipper's prayers cannot calm a tempest or bring a return of clear weather. Cyrus the Elder thinks<sup>499</sup> that those who have not learned how to steer have no right to expect their prayers to save ships when they take the helm. Ovid<sup>500</sup> is just as sure of the uselessness of praying for rain.

<sup>491</sup>See Ovid, *Fasti* 5.301-302 *Saepe Iovem vidi, cum iam sua mittere vellet fulmina, tunc dato sustinuisse manum.*

<sup>492</sup>See, for example, *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* 3.4501 (Syria); 2.3446 (Lydia).

<sup>493</sup>Suetonius, *Augustus* 29.3; Dio 54.4.2. See also *Monumentum Ancyranum* 19; Pliny 34.79, 36.50. In a somewhat similar manner a *lectisternium* was set up in a temple on behalf of the safety of Hadrian, who had evidently had a narrow escape from being struck by thunderbolts. See *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* 1.4501.

<sup>494</sup>Dio 72.9.5 (The Loeb Classical Library 9.30-31). See *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 18.164-165.

<sup>495</sup>*De Miraculis Sancti Iuliani* 2.27 (Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 71.817).

<sup>496</sup>Chapter 3 (London, J. R. Smith, 1856).

<sup>497</sup>6.222 *ignis enim sunt haec non venti signa neque imbris.*

<sup>498</sup>5.1226-1232. <sup>499</sup>Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1.6.6.

<sup>500</sup>*Remedia Amoris* 219.

Many passages show that it was a commonplace bit of knowledge among scientific men that thunder and lightning were caused by the collision and struggling of clouds driven on by winds<sup>501</sup>. In the effort to help the simple-minded and the superstitious to remove the phenomena from the realm of the supernatural to the natural, they explained that friction of clouds generated fire in the same way as does the friction of stones or wheels or trees in a forest or wood in general<sup>502</sup>. After a bolt had fallen into a camp of Pericles and utterly terrified his soldiers, he took stones and struck a spark from them, explaining that bolts were generated in the same way by the clashing of clouds<sup>503</sup>. The noise of thunder has been compared to that caused by the bursting of a bladder<sup>504</sup> or by the clapping of hands<sup>505</sup>.

Manilius asserted<sup>506</sup> with confidence that reason or science had taken away from Jupiter the thunderbolt and the power of thundering. Manilius was merely the spokesman for the learned. This idea never reached the masses<sup>507</sup>. When Jupiter died in the conflict with Christianity, the people merely transferred the bolt. The striking of a building by lightning is still "an act of God".

#### MODERN REFERENCES

The following references may be found useful for a hasty comparison of modern and ancient weather lore of thunder and lightning: F. G. Aflalo, *Fishermen's Weather*, 205-227<sup>508</sup>; H. H. C. Dunwoody, 80-82 (see note 3, above); *Handwörterbuch des Deutschen Aberglaubens*<sup>509</sup>, under *Blitz*, *Donner*; Richard Inwards, *Weather Lore: A Collection of Proverbs, Sayings, and Rules Concerning the Weather*<sup>510</sup>, 141-144; C. Swainson, *A Handbook of Weather Folk-Lore*, 214-217<sup>511</sup>.

In this paper, as in previous articles, I have tried to give by quotation or citation all the weather signs which I could find, but in the periphery of the subject, in which there is a shading off to a wealth of material not strictly connected with the weather, I have endeavored to be merely selective.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

EUGENE S. MCCARTNEY

<sup>501</sup>See Stobaeus, *Eclogae Physicae* 1.29 (see the Wachsmuth-Hense edition, 1.231-238 [compare note 121, above]).

<sup>502</sup>Lucretius 6.161-163; Pliny 2.113; Seneca 2.22.1; Isidorus, *Origines* 13.9.1.

<sup>503</sup>Frontinus, *Strategemata* 1.12.10.

<sup>504</sup>Aristophanes, *Nubes* 403-407; Lucretius 6.130-131; Pliny 2.113; Isidorus, *Origines* 13.8.2.

<sup>505</sup>Seneca 2.27.3.

<sup>506</sup>*Astronomicum* 1.104 <ratio> eripuit... Iovi fulmen viresque tonanti.

<sup>507</sup>In the early part of the Middle Ages the masses conferred the bolt on magicians. See the text connected with note 416, above.

<sup>508</sup>London, A. and C. Black, 1906.

<sup>509</sup>See end of note 199, above.

<sup>510</sup>London, Elliot Stock, 1898.

<sup>511</sup>Edinburgh and London, Blackwood and Sons, 1873.

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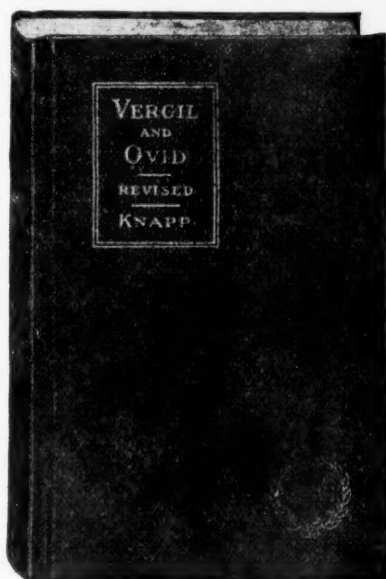
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